

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action mailed May 3, 2007.
All objections and rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-28 are pending in the case.

Claims 1-28 have been amended.

No new claims have been added.

Claim Objections

At paragraph 1 of the Office Action, claims 2-17, 19-24 and 26 were objected to as containing informalities, specifically relating to the usage of “a” rather than “the.” The Applicant has amended such claims to be clearer and accordingly this objection is believed to be moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

At paragraphs 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 1-4, 12, 13-16, 25, 26, 27 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Ishwar et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0017816 (hereinafter Ishwar).

The Applicant’s claim 1, representative in part of the other rejected claims, sets forth:

1. In a data network comprising a plurality of nodes, a method for transferring data packets between a source node and a destination node contained in the network, wherein the source node and destination node belong to the same virtual-local-area network (VLAN), the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a virtual port associated with the destination node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections, a particular connection associated with the VLAN;

acquiring a data packet from the source node, wherein the packet is associated with the VLAN and contains a destination address associated with the destination node; and

transferring the packet to the destination node over the particular connection via the virtual port.

Ishwar discloses “logical ports” to for passing VLAN packets. *See* abstract and paragraph 40. A logical port is bound to a particular physical port and to a particular “VLAN tunnel” connecting to a destination. *See* paragraph 0037 and 0039. That is, “one logical port is established for each connection by binding the logical port to the corresponding physical port and to the respective VLAN tunnel.” *See* paragraph 0041.

The Applicant respectfully urges that Ishwar does not teach or suggest the Applicant’s claimed “***establishing a virtual port associated with the destination node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections, a particular connection associated with the VLAN.***”

While Ishwar binds a logical port to a particular VLAN tunnel (i.e., so that logical ports are bound to VLAN tunnels in a one-to-one relationship), the Applicant novelly claims a ***virtual port supporting a plurality of connections***. While such a configuration introduces additional complexities, it advantageously overcomes shortcomings of systems such as the one discussed in Ishwar. For example, limited resources may be available in a node, and use of logical ports bound to VLAN tunnels in a one-to-one relationship may not be practicable when large numbers of VLAN tunnels are needed. The Applicant respectfully refers the Examiner to the Background section of the Application at page 3, lines 10-15 which touches upon this shortcoming of prior systems.

In summary, the Applicant respectfully urges that Ishwar is legally insufficient to anticipate the present claims under 35 U.S.C. §102 due to the absence of a teaching or suggestion of “***establishing a virtual port associated with the destination node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections, a particular connection associated with the VLAN.***”

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

At paragraphs 4-7, and 11 of the Office Action, claims 5, 21, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishwar in view of Delaney et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,937,574 (hereinafter Delaney).

At paragraphs 8 and 10 of the Office Action, claims 6, 7, 9-11, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishwar.

The Applicant respectfully urges that each of these claims is a dependent claims that depends from an independent claim that is believed to be allowable. Accordingly, these dependent claims are believed to be allowable due to their dependency, as well as for other independent reasons.

At paragraph 9 of the Office Action, claims 8, 18, 19, 20 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ishwar in view of Delaney.

The Applicant notes that claim 8 is a dependent claim that depends from independent claim 1, discussed above. Accordingly, as claim 1 is believed to be allowable, dependent claim 8 is also believed to be allowable due to its dependency, as well as for other independent reasons.

The Applicant's claim 18, representative in part of claims 19, 20 and 24, sets forth:

18. In a data network comprising a plurality of nodes, a method for transferring data packets between a source node and a destination node contained in the network, wherein the source node and destination node belong to the same virtual-local-area network (VLAN), the method comprising the steps of:

generating a data packet at the source node, wherein the data packet contains a destination address associated with the destination node;
transferring the packet to a source intermediate node contained in the network;

at the source intermediate node, (i) acquiring the packet, (ii) identifying a VLAN associated with the packet, (iii) identifying a virtual port through which the destination node may be reached, node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections, (iv) identifying a particular connec-

tion that is associated with the virtual port and the packet's VLAN, and (v) transferring the packet over the particular connection via the virtual port to a destination intermediate node contained in the network; and
at the destination intermediate node, (i) acquiring the packet, (ii) identifying a port through which the destination node may be reached and (iii) forwarding the acquired packet to the destination node.

Delaney discusses a technique for packet routing, where packets are directed to virtual ports associated with a virtual private network (VPN). *See abstract.* A multiplex switch receives a frame and forwards the frame on an appropriate pathway. *See col. 9, lines 18-19 and 34-39.*

The Applicant respectfully urges that the combination Ishwar and Delaney does not teach or suggest the Applicant's claimed "*identifying a virtual port through which the destination node may be reached, node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections*" and "*identifying a particular connection that is associated with the virtual port and the packet's VLAN.*"

As discussed above, Ishwar binds a logical port to a particular VLAN tunnel (i.e., so that logical ports are bound to VLAN tunnels in a one-to-one relationship), while the Applicant novelly claims a *virtual port supporting a plurality of connections*. Delaney does little to remedy the shortcomings of Ishwar, simply discussing a technique for packet routing where packets are directed to virtual ports.

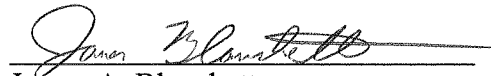
Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully urges that the combination of Ishwar and Delaney is legally insufficient to make obvious the present claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 due to the absence of the claimed "*identifying a virtual port through which the destination node may be reached, node, the virtual port supporting a plurality of connections*" and "*identifying a particular connection that is associated with the virtual port and the packet's VLAN.*"

Should the Examiner believe a telephonic interview would be helpful in the disposition of this Application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (617) 951-2500.

In summary, all the independent claims are believed to be in condition for allowance and therefore all dependent claims that depend there from are believed to be in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully solicits favorable action.

Please charge any additional fee occasioned by this paper to our Deposit Account No. 03-1237.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James A. Blanchette", is written over a horizontal line.

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